



J. TYLER McCAULEY  
AUDITOR-CONTROLLER

**COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES  
DEPARTMENT OF AUDITOR-CONTROLLER**

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May 30, 2006

TO: Mayor Michael D. Antonovich  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky  
Supervisor Don Knabe

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley  
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORT - HART  
COMMUNITY HOMES, PREWITT HOUSE GROUP HOME**

We have completed a review of Prewitt House Group Home operated by Hart Community Homes, Incorporated. The Agency contracts with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Prewitt House Group Home is a six-bed facility, which provides care for boys ages 13-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Prewitt House was providing services for two Los Angeles County DCFS children and four Orange County children.

Prewitt House Group Home is located in Orange County.

**Scope of Review**

The purpose of the review is to determine whether the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. Additionally, the review covers basic child safety and licensing issues, and includes an evaluation of the Agency's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, a facility inspection, and interviews with children placed in the Group Home at the time of the review. Interviews with children are designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the Agency, and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

*"To Enrich Lives Through Effective and Caring Service"*

### **Summary of Findings**

Generally, the Agency is providing the services as outlined in their Program Statement. The Agency needs to address several deficient areas.

Prewitt House Group Home needs to repair the broken kitchen window; clean and/or paint the walls throughout the house; complete initial assessments within the first thirty days of placement; create comprehensive Needs and Services Plans that include long and short-term goals; maintain current psychiatric evaluations; provide children with the required weekly allowance; and assist children in creating life books/photo albums.

Attached is a detailed report of the review.

### **Review of Report**

We discussed our report with the Agency's management. In response to the recommendations made in the report, the Agency's management completed a corrective action plan (attached) which we approved. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our review.

If you have any questions, please contact me, or have your staff contact Mike Pirolo at (626) 293-1110.

JTM:MP:CC:jdh

[http://auditor.co.la.ca.us/group\\_home.asp](http://auditor.co.la.ca.us/group_home.asp)

### **Attachments**

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer  
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS  
Robert B. Taylor, Chief Probation Officer  
Cari Hart, Executive Director, Hart Community Homes  
Public Information Office  
Audit Committee

**Hart Community Homes, Incorporated  
Prewitt House Group Home  
706 East Meats Avenue  
Orange, California 92865  
Phone: (714) 921-4087  
License Number: 306001431  
Rate Classification Level: 12**

**I. Facility and Environment**

**Method of assessment – Observation**

**Comments:**

Prewitt House Group Home is located in a residential community. The exterior of the Group Home is well maintained. The front and back yards are clean, and adequately landscaped.

Overall, the interior of the Group Home and common quarters are neat. There is adequate furniture and lighting in the Group Home. The Group Home provides a home-like environment. However, walls throughout the home are smudged with dirt; and the kitchen window is broken.

Children's bedrooms are well maintained. The rooms are clean and orderly, and have age-appropriate personalized decorations. There is adequate furniture, lighting, and storage space. Window coverings and window screens are in good repair. The mattresses are comfortable, and the beds all have a full complement of linens. Children's sleeping arrangements are appropriate.

The Group Home maintains age appropriate and accessible recreational equipment. There are also board games, a TV, and a DVD player. Books and resource materials, including a computer with a variety of programs, are also available.

The Group Home maintains a sufficient supply of perishable and non perishable foods.

**Recommendations**

**1. Hart Community Homes management:**

- a. Clean and/or paint walls throughout the home as needed.**
- b. Replace the broken kitchen window.**

## **II. Program Services**

### **Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size for interviews: Two**

#### **Comments:**

Children meet the Group Home's population criteria as outlined in their Program Statement. However, children are not consistently assessed for needed services within thirty days of placement.

The treatment team develops and implements the Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) with input from the child. The NSPs are current; however, they are not comprehensive, and do not include long and short-term goals.

Case files reflect adequate documentation to show that children are receiving treatment services.

### **Recommendations**

#### **2. Hart Community Homes management:**

- a. Assess all children for needed services within thirty days of placement.**
- b. Maintain NSPs that are comprehensive, specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time limited and include short term and long term goals for all children.**

## **III. Educational and Emancipation Services**

### **Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size for interviews: Two**

#### **Comments:**

Children are attending school. Children are provided with educational support and resources to meet their educational needs, and are progressing satisfactorily in school. The Group Home's program includes the development of children's daily living, self-help, and survival skills.

Children are provided with opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs as appropriate.

### **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations.

## **IV. Recreation and Activities**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size for interviews: Two**

### **Comments:**

The Group Home provides children with sufficient recreational activities, and leisure time. Children are provided with opportunities to participate in planning activities.

Children participate in extra-curricular, enrichment, and social activities in which they have an interest.

The Group Home provides transportation to and from the activities.

### **Recommendations**

There are no recommendations for this section.

## **V. Psychotropic Medication**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents**

### **Comments:**

Children have current court authorizations for psychotropic medication. However, children are not routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.

Children are informed about their psychotropic medication; however, they are not aware of their right to refuse medication.

Medication distribution logs are properly maintained.

### **Recommendations**

#### **3. Hart Community Homes management:**

- a. Ensure that children taking psychotropic medication are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.**

**b. Inform children of their right to refuse psychotropic medication.**

**VI. Personal Rights**

**Method of assessment –Interviews with children**

**Sample size for interviews: Two**

**Comments:**

Children are informed about the Group Home's policies and procedures. Children report that they feel safe in the Group Home, and are provided with appropriate staff supervision. Children express satisfaction with the quality of their interactions with staff, and report that staff treats them with respect and dignity.

Children report that they are assigned chores that are reasonable and not too demanding. Children are able to make and receive personal telephone calls, send and receive unopened mail, and have private visitors. Children are able to attend religious services of their choice.

Children report that the discipline policies are consistently enforced and that there are fair and appropriate consequences for inappropriate behavior.

Children report satisfaction with meals and snacks.

Children receive voluntary medical, dental, and psychiatric care.

**Recommendations**

**There are no recommendations for this section.**

**VII. Clothing and Allowance**

**Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and interviews**

**Sample size for interviews: Two**

**Comments:**

The Group Home provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and the required \$50 monthly clothing allowance to children. Children are provided with opportunities to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to children is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

Children spend their allowances as they choose. However, they are not always provided with the required minimum weekly allowance.

The Group Home provides children with adequate personal care items.

Children are not encouraged or assisted in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

**Recommendations**

**4. Hart Community Homes management:**

- a. Provide children with the required minimum weekly allowance.**
- b. Encourage and assist children in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.**

Jacquelyn Hayes, Children's Group Home Ombudsman  
Department of Auditor-Controller, Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration  
500 W. Temple St., Room 515-A  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2006

Dear Ms. Hayes,

The following is in response to your request for an updated/revised Corrective Action Plan (CAP).

**I. Facility and Environment**

**Recommendations**

- a. Clean and/or paint walls throughout the home.
- b. Replace the glass in the kitchen window.

**CAP:**

- a. Walls in question were painted on February 10<sup>th</sup> by Ron Matlock (contractor).
- b. The glass window was repaired on December 13<sup>th</sup> by Brundige Glass.

**II. Program Services**

**Recommendations**

- a. Assess children for needed services within thirty days of placement.
- b. Maintain NSPs that are comprehensive, specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time limited, and include short term and long term goals for all children.

**CAP:**

- a. During the visit, the NSP was unable to be located by HCH staff. A new NSP was written, and as of 2/28/06, all children have current NSPs.
- b. Each NSP has been written according to the individual child's needs. Target behaviors are described in detail, as are the methods for addressing them. There are both long term and short term goals for each child, and they are effectively measured by a 'points' system which rewards appropriate behavior.

**V. Psychotropic Medication**

**Recommendations**

- a. Ensure that children are routinely seen by the prescribing psychiatrist.
- b. Inform children of their right to refuse psychotropic medication.

**CAP:**

- a. All children are assessed on a monthly basis by a psychiatrist for medication management, and documentation stating so will be available upon request. As of December 15<sup>th</sup>, a new form was implemented which documents all phone contact between the psychiatrist offices and Hart Community Homes.



b. All children have been informed of their right to refuse medication. As of 2/28/06, a new document has been created for new client's to sign at the time of admission. This informs them of their right to refuse medication.

**VII. Clothing and Allowance**

**Recommendations**

- a. Provide children with the required minimum weekly allowance.
- b. Encourage and assist children in creating and maintaining photo albums/life books.

**CAP:**

- a. The allowance system was modified, granting children a minimum of seven (7) dollars in weekly allowance.
- b. Photo albums were purchased and given to each client on December 20<sup>st</sup>, 2005.

Sincerely,



April Tillett